



Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Alaska
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Fact Sheet

November 2001

Poles, Inc. Oldtown, Idaho

Preliminary air sampling results show that an emergency action is not needed at the Poles, Inc. site, in Oldtown, Idaho.

In this fact sheet you will find an update on the investigation of hazardous materials at Poles, Inc. and information about the air sampling results.

What's Happening

EPA collected air, soil, water and sediment samples at the Poles, Inc. wood treating facility and several locations throughout the community of Oldtown, Idaho in August, 2001. The goal was to determine if the wood treating facility had released or is releasing chemicals into the environment. "We were formally asked by the community to determine if the facility was or is releasing harmful quantities of chemicals into the air, water, and soil that would cause EPA to take immediate emergency actions," stated Michael Szerlog, EPA On-Scene Coordinator.



Air sampling shows no immediate health concern.

At this time, EPA's contractors are drafting the final report summarizing all the results of the sampling effort. It may take several months to complete an evaluation of all the data that was collected in August. However, in an effort to get the available air results information to the community as quickly as possible, this summary fact sheet was developed. Detailed data tables will be available when the final report is released.

Air sampling results

Air sampling results detected the presence of wood treating chemicals in some of the air samples. Results were reviewed by EPA, Idaho Division of Health (IDH) and the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Based on this review, EPA does not consider these concentrations of wood treating chemicals to be an immediate health concern that would cause EPA to take emergency actions.

The air samples were taken for three days, while poles were being treated. Air sampling instruments were set up on-site near the poles treatment system, off-site

near the Idaho Hill Elementary School, near residences, and across the Pend Orielle River. The samples were sent to a commercial laboratory to test for semi-volatile organic compounds, which include the wood preserving chemical pentachlorophenol and other chemicals used in the wood treating process.

Next Steps

In the next few months, EPA will be looking at the air sampling results along with wipe samples from within the school, soil samples and groundwater samples to determine if the facility needs to conduct non-emergency long-term cleanup or protective actions. EPA will be working with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), ATSDR, and the Idaho Division of Health to determine which actions, if any, the facility may have to take. "When the report is completed, EPA will meet with the Community Advisory Group and other interested people to discuss all the sampling results and future steps" said Szerlog.

Below: Drilling equipment taking soil samples. Results are not yet available.



Photo Above: Idaho Hills Elementary School was among the sites where samples were collected.

For More information

If you have questions, please contact any of the following people:

EPA 1-800-424-4372

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Mark Ader, Site Assessment Manager,
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Lilibeth Serrano, Community Outreach,
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IDEQ

Paula Lyon, Project Manager,
(208) 769-1422

Idaho Division of Health

(208)-334-0606

Elke Shaw-Tullock, Manager
Dr. Mingyi Trimble, Toxicologist

ATSDR

Karen Larson, (206)-553-6948

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the EPA numbers above.

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Background Information

Poles, Inc. is a wood treating facility located 400 feet from the southwest bank of the Pend Orielle River in Oldtown, Bonner County, Idaho. Poles, Inc. uses pentachlorophenol as a wood preservative. Since 1945 the facility has been operating nine months out of the year, closing during December, January and February. The nearest residence is about 400 feet west of the facility. The Idaho Hill Elementary School is about 500 feet south of the facility on a hill approximately 30 feet higher in elevation.

In January 2001, IDH, and IDEQ met with citizens of Oldtown to discuss public health concerns about the pole treatment process at Poles, Inc. In that meeting, the community of Oldtown presented various health concerns and in particular wanted to know if their health is being impacted by pentachlorophenol, a pesticide used to treat wood poles.

In April, 2001, IDEQ completed an air model used at the Poles Inc. site to assess how pentachlorophenol might move through the air near the facility. The Idaho Division of Health evaluated the air modeling results. All of the agencies determined that the computer modeling posed high uncertainty and recommended that air sampling be performed at the Oldtown, Idaho site to adequately determine if pentachlorophenol, or other chemicals, have reached hazardous levels in and around the Poles Inc. site.

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We are using a carrier route mailing list for this first fact sheet. If you would like to receive future information about the Poles, Inc. site, please fill out this form and return it to EPA.

Name: _____

Company or Group (if any): _____

Address: _____

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1. Fold this page in half so that your address information is on the inside.
2. Tape closed.
3. Put on a \$.34 stamp.
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